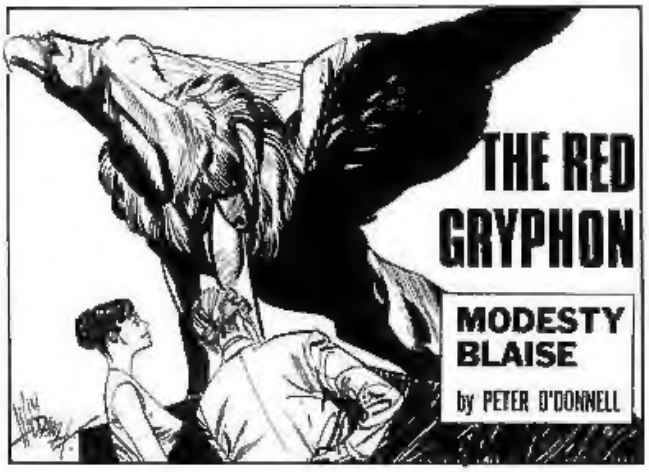
Modesty BLAISE

THE RED GRYPHON

by PETER O'DONNELL and JIM HOLDAWAY



MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HALLO, MAX— ARE YOU COMING HOME FOR LUNCH?
MODESTY! DON'T GO AROUND WITHOUT A HELMET, DON'T CLAMBER ABOUT RICKETY ROOFS...

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I HAVE TO TALK TO THE CONTRACTOR ABOUT RENEWING SOME ROOF TIMBERS —CAN YOU HOLD LUNCH FOR AN HOUR, MODESTY?
AND WAIT TWO? NO!

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

YOU'RE HITTING A LOT OF PROBLEMS WITH THIS JOB, MAX
WELL... WHEN A WEALTHY ROMAN BUYS A PALAZZO FOUR CENTURIES OLD, WANTING IT STRIPPED OUT AND RENOVATED REGARDLESS OF COST—
HE NATURALLY CALLS IN A BRILLIANT YOUNG ARCHITECT
OF COURSE— WHO NATURALLY EXPECTS A LOT OF PROBLEMS
WHICH MAKES HIM DITCH THE GIRL HE CLAIMS TO ADORE— WELL, I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER MAN TO LUNCH WITH
1692

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY! CARISSIMA! CARA MIA!— AND SUNDRY OTHER ROMANTIC ITALIAN LOVE-CRIES— DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T FIND ANOTHER MAN FOR LUNCH!
MAX, YOU CLOWN! YOU'LL RUIN THOSE SLACKS!
I DON'T CARE, I TELL YOU, I DON'T CARE! OH, HOW CAN I MELT THAT STONY HEART?
TRY ME WITH LOBSTER THERMIDOR AT PARINI'S, TWO O' CLOCK
A DEAL— AND I'LL TAKE THE AFTERNOON OFF
1693

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY HEADS ACROSS THE LAGOON TO VENICE . . .
AND WINDS THROUGH THE NETWORK OF CANALS ON THE WAY TO HER FLAT
SMALL BOY HIDING, BIG POLICEMAN SEARCHING...
1694

MODESTY BLAISE

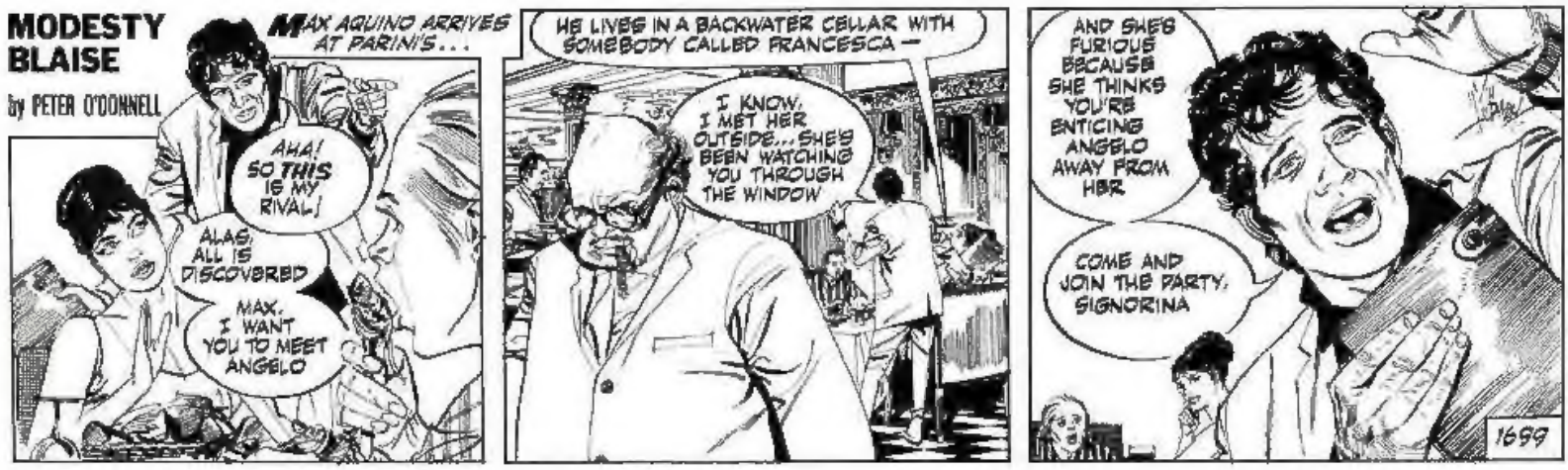
by PETER O'DONNELL

THE URCHIN HIDES FROM THE PURSUING POLICEMAN
He'll find you there...
...get in and tuck down under that rug, quick
Thank you, signorina
And keep quiet!
1695

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
YOU CAN COME OUT NOW — WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND WHY WAS THAT POLICEMAN CHASING YOU?
I AM ANGELO
DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S WRONG TO STEAL?
I TOOK A POMEGRANATE FROM A STALL
YES, SIGNORINA, BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY
A PHILOSOPHER! I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO ARGUE THAT POINT, BUT I'M NOT REALLY THE ONE TO DO IT
1696

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HAVE YOU HAD A GOOD SCRUB UNDER THE SHOWER, ANGELO?
YES, SIGNORINA — IS ALL THIS YOUR FLAT?
I'M RENTING IT FOR A WHILE, WHY?
DID YOU KNOW A MAN HAS BEEN HERE? I SAW HIS RAZOR!
AND YOU USED HIS HAIRCREAM! AS A MATTER OF FACT I DID KNOW — WE'RE GOING TO EAT WITH HIM NOW, SO LET'S HURRY
EAT!
1697

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AT PARINI'S
HE'S CLEAN, GUIDO, AND HE'S HUNGRY — SO JUST PUT US IN A CORNER AND DON'T MAKE A FUSS
SIGNORINA BLAISE — THE CHILD, HE IS IN RAGS!
MR. AQUINO WILL BE ALONG SOON, BUT WE WON'T KEEP OUR YOUNG GUEST WAITING
CAN YOU READ, ANGELO?
NOT WELL... BUT WELL ENOUGH, SIGNORINA!
AH, PLEASE! IF HE CHOOSES FOR HIMSELF HE WILL BE SICK!
VERY LIKELY... BUT ONE MEAL ISN'T GOING TO PUT ANY FLESH ON HIM, GUIDO, SO HE MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY IT
1698


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MAX AQUINO ARRIVES AT PARINI'S...
AHA! SO THIS IS MY RIVAL!
ALAS, ALL IS DISCOVERED
MAX, I WANT YOU TO MEET ANGELO
HE LIVES IN A BACKWATER CELLAR WITH SOMEBODY CALLED FRANCESCA —
I KNOW, I MET HER OUTSIDE... SHE'S BEEN WATCHING YOU THROUGH THE WINDOW
AND SHE'S FURIOUS BECAUSE SHE THINKS YOU'RE ENTICING ANGELO AWAY FROM HER
COME AND JOIN THE PARTY, SIGNORINA
1699

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

SIGNORINA, PLEASE! FIRST YOU COME WITH A BEGGAR-BOY AND NOW COMES MR. AQUINO WITH A BEGGAR-GIRL!
IT'S WHAT WE CALL A COINCIDENCE, GUIDO
AND THEY'RE NOT REALLY BEGGARS, THEY GO IN MORE FOR STEALING — BUT DON'T WORRY, WE'LL CHECK THE CUTLERY BEFORE WE GO
FRANCESCA! THE POLICEMAN DIDN'T CATCH YOU, THEN?
NO, HE WAS TOO FAT — I THOUGHT THE OTHER ONE HAD CAUGHT YOU!
1700

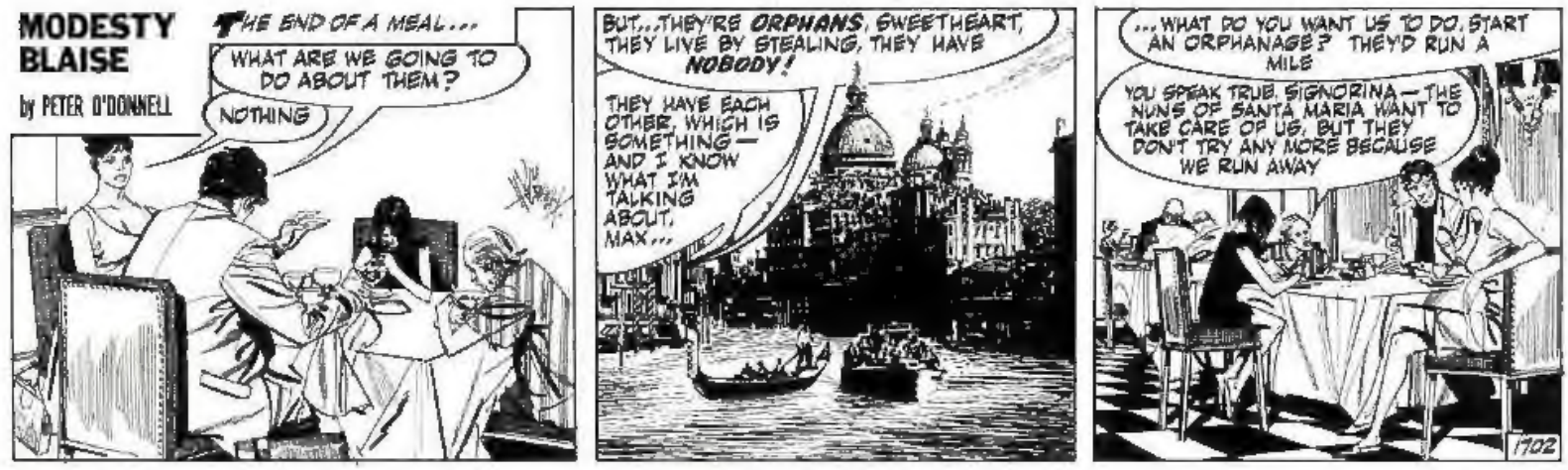
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

THIS LADY HID ME FROM THE POLICEMAN IN HER BOAT, AND MADE ME HAVE A SHOWER IN A BEAUTIFUL FLAT, AND BROUGHT ME HERE —
I SAW YOU WITH HER, I SAW YOU COME IN
IT'S ALL RIGHT, FRANCESCA, SHE'S NOT GOING TO KEEP ME, I WAS COMING BACK HOME WHEN I'D EATEN ALL I COULD
AND LOOK — I HID LOTS OF FOOD TO BRING BACK FOR YOU
1701

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


THE END OF A MEAL...
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THEM?
NOTHING
BUT...THEY'RE ORPHANS, SWEETHEART, THEY LIVE BY STEALING, THEY HAVE NOBODY!
THEY HAVE EACH OTHER, WHICH IS SOMETHING — AND I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, MAX...
...WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO, START AN ORPHANAGE? THEY'D RUN A MILE
YOU SPEAK TRUE, SIGNORINA — THE NUNS OF SANTA MARIA WANT TO TAKE CARE OF US, BUT THEY DON'T TRY ANY MORE BECAUSE WE RUN AWAY
1702

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WHY DO YOU RUN AWAY WHEN THE NUNS TAKE YOU INTO CARE?
BECAUSE THEY HAVE A HOME FOR BOYS AND A HOME FOR GIRLS — WE CAN'T STAY TOGETHER
SO THEY'D RATHER LIVE ROUGH AND GO HUNGRY THAN BE SEPARATED
THAT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN'T BUY, SELL OR STEAL — HERE, WIPE YOUR NOSE, FRANCESCA
AND YOU'D BETTER KEEP THE HANDKERCHIEF
SIGNORINA, I — I CAN EAT NO MORE... AND I THINK WE HAD BETTER GO QUICKLY NOW
1703

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

HERE'S SOMETHING FOR THE HOUSEKEEPING— OFF YOU GO, AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF EACH OTHER
THANK YOU, SIGNORINA
GOODBYE, SIGNORINA
GOODBYE, SIGNORE
IT WASN'T VERY NICE TO STEAL HIS CASE, ANGELO
HE'S STILL RICH, ISN'T HE? I COULDN'T GET THE SIGNORINA'S BAG — SHE WAS TOO CAREFUL
1704

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

I'M NOT SENTIMENTAL, BUT THOSE TWO KIDS BROUGHT A LUMP TO MY THROAT...
WHERE'S THE HELL'S MY BRIEF-CASE?
OH, YOU DIDN'T JUST LEAVE IT BY YOUR CHAIR WITH ANGELO AROUND!
ANGELO? YOU MEAN HE—? OH, THAT'S NICE! AND I JUST FED HIM AND HIS LADY FRIEND A VAST MEAL!
WELL... THE LUMP'S GONE
MY POOR INNOCENT MAX, IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT— THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO LET A SUCKER OFF THE HOOK JUST OUT OF GRATITUDE!
1705

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

ANGELO AND FRANCESCA GO THROUGH THE STOLEN BRIEF-CASE

JUST SOME LETTERS, AND PAPERS WITH DRAWINGS— NOTHING WE CAN SELL
EXCEPT THE CASE...
WHAT'S THAT OLD-LOOKING PAPER, ANGELO?
I DON'T KNOW...
IT'S IN OLD WRITING, TOO... LOOK, THERE'S A DATE AND THERE'S A NAME... COUNT ALBORINI
HE'S RICH— HE LIVES IN THAT BIG PALAZZO ALBORINI, OFF THE GRAND CANAL
1706

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

EVENING IN VENICE

I STILL PREFER THOSE BRATS WHO STOLE MY CASE TO OUR HOST FOR TONIGHT
IF YOU AND COUNT ALBORINI DON'T LIKE EACH OTHER, WHY ARE WE GOING?
SO I CAN SHOW YOU OFF AND WATCH HIM TURN A NICE BILIOUS GREEN WITH ENVY
THAT'S YOUR REASON— WHAT'S HIS REASON FOR INVITING YOU?
VENETIANS ARE ALWAYS POLITE TO THEIR FOES— MAKES IT EASIER TO STAB THEM IN THE BACK WHEN THE CHANCE COMES
1707

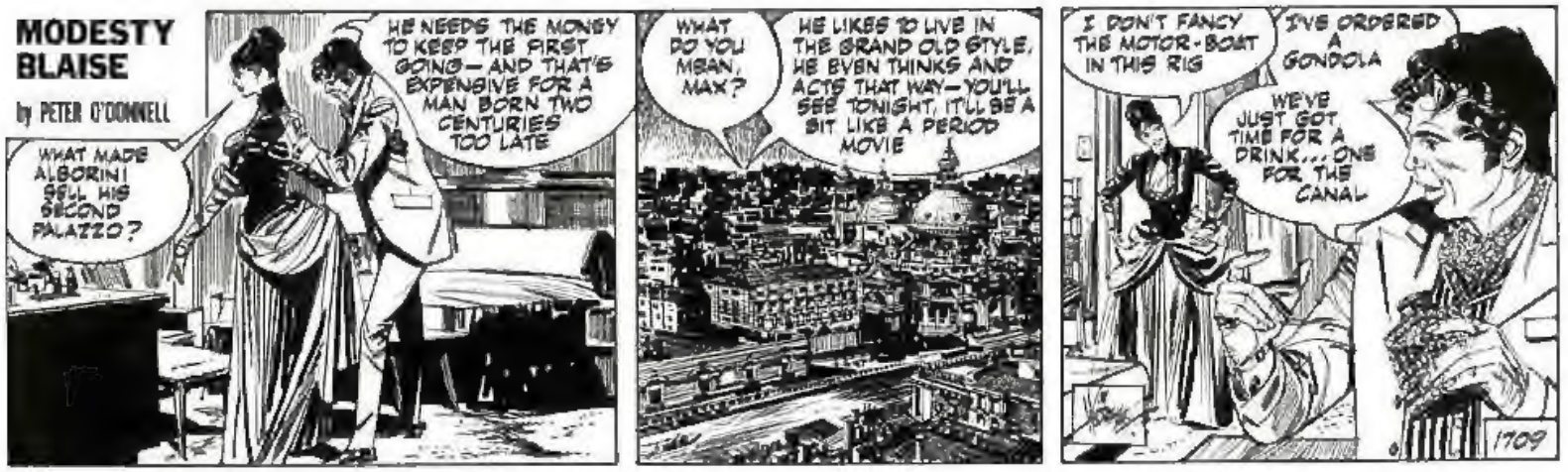
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

ANY GOOD REASON WHY YOU AND COUNT ALBORINI DON'T GET ON?
GOOD ENOUGH — HE SOLD THE ISLAND OF TASSO COMPLETE WITH PALAZZO TO MY WEALTHY ROMAN CLIENT...
...I HANDLED THE WHOLE DEAL, AND ALBORINI TRIED TO BRIBE ME INTO LOADING THE PRICE
AH! AND WHAT DID OUR BRILLIANT YOUNG ARCHITECT SAY TO THAT?
I FREELY TRANSLATED A PUNGENT PHRASE THAT I LEARNED AT SCHOOL IN ENGLAND — TOLD HIM TO STUFF HIS BRIBS UP HIS ARISTOCRATIC JUMPER
1708

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


WHAT MADE ALBORINI SELL HIS SECOND PALAZZO?
HE NEEDS THE MONEY TO KEEP THE FIRST GOING — AND THAT'S EXPENSIVE FOR A MAN BORN TWO CENTURIES TOO LATE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MAX?
HE LIKES TO LIVE IN THE GRAND OLD STYLE, HE EVEN THINKS AND ACTS THAT WAY — YOU'LL SEE TONIGHT, IT'LL BE A BIT LIKE A PERIOD MOVIE
I DON'T FANCY THE MOTOR-BOAT IN THIS RIG
I'VE ORDERED A GONDOLA
WE'VE JUST GOT TIME FOR A DRINK... ONE FOR THE CANAL
1709

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MAX, WAS THERE ANYTHING IMPORTANT IN THE BRIEF-CASE THOSE URCHINS STOLE?
YES AND NO ... IT WAS IMPORTANT, BUT LOSING IT DOESN'T MATTER
1710
DON'T BE MYSTERIOUS
IT'S QUITE DELIBERATE — I INTEND TO WHET YOUR CURIOSITY AND THEN FRUSTRATE IT, SO LISTEN...
...WHEN WE WERE TAKING APART THAT PALAZZO DOME TODAY I FOUND SOMETHING — A LETTER WRITTEN OVER A CENTURY AGO!

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WHAT DID THIS ANCIENT LETTER SAY?
WAIT AND SEE, SWEETHEART! BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS — COUNT ALBORINI SOLD THE ISLAND, THE PALAZZO, "AND ALL THINGS CONTAINED THEREON AND THEREIN..."
...AND HE'S GOING TO KICK HIS OWN ARISTOCRATIC BEHIND WHEN HE FINDS OUT WHAT THAT INCLUDES!
MAX AQUINO — TELL ME!
THAT WOULD SPOIL THE SURPRISE — BUT I'LL SHOW YOU, ONCE WE'VE DEMOLISHED THE RED GRYPHON!
1711

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SO THE RED GRYPHON HOLDS A SECRET?
NO MORE QUESTIONS — I'M GOING TO BE AS MYSTERIOUS AS YOU ARE
AS I AM? I WOULDN'T THINK THERE WERE ANY MYSTERIES LEFT FOR YOU TO UNRAVEL
YOU HAVE A POINT...
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR PAST? WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? HOW DID YOU GET RICH? WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET MARRIED? AND WHO'S THIS MAN WILLIE GARVIN YOU OCCASIONALLY TELEPHONE?
1712
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
OH, I — I CAN'T HAVE YOU COOKING FOR THREE!
IF YOU'RE CURIOUS ABOUT WILLIE GARVIN I'LL ASK HIM TO JOIN US FOR A WHILE — YOU'D GET ON WELL TOGETHER
AND I'VE JUST REMEMBERED, MY MOTHER WAS FRIGHTENED BY A BOWLER HAT, SO I HAVE A COMPLEX ABOUT ENGLISHMEN! THEY GIVE ME FUNNY TURNS...
WILLIE WOULDN'T STAY WITH US, IDIOT!
AND YOU'D BETTER STOP FOOLING NOW — WE'VE ARRIVED
1713
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE GRAND BALL AT THE PALAZZO ALBORINI...
YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT HIS NIBS CLINGING TO THE PAST?
VERY MUCH SO...
...GLITTER ON THE SURFACE, AND A LOT OF UNDERCURRENTS BENEATH — THERE'S A TOUCH OF THE BORGIAS ABOUT IT
YOU HAVE A QUICK NOSE FOR ATMOSPHERE, DARLING
1714
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
COUNT ALBORINI CIRCULATES AMONG HIS GUESTS...
I AM SO GLAD AQUINO BROUGHT YOU ALONG, MISS BLAISE — ARE YOU ENJOYING YOUR EVENING?
VERY MUCH... IT HAS ALL THE FASCINATION OF STEPPING BACK INTO THE PAST
AH, IF ONLY WE COULD — THIS MODERN WORLD IS NOT TO MY TASTE
NOW MAY I STEAL AQUINO AWAY FROM YOU FOR A FEW MOMENTS? AN URGENT MATTER OF BUSINESS...
OF COURSE
1715

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

THE PARTY AT THE PALAZZO ALBORINI ENDS IN THE EARLY HOURS

YOUR FRIEND THE COUNT LOOKS AS IF SOMEBODY'S TWISTING A KNIFE IN HIM

MY OWN FINE ITALIAN HAND...

...HE'S FOUND OUT ABOUT **THE RED GRYPHON** — OH, HE DIDN'T **SAY** AS MUCH, BUT WHY ELSE WOULD HE WANT TO BUY THE UGLY GREAT BRUTE?

1716

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MAX... **WHAT** HAS ALBORINI FOUND OUT ABOUT **THE RED GRYPHON?**

DON'T TRY TO WORM THE SECRET OUT OF ME — I WANT TO SURPRISE YOU

ALL RIGHT — BUT TONIGHT **HE** ASKED TO BUY THE THING AND **YOU** WOULDN'T SELL?

NOT FOR A MILLION DOLLARS, EVEN IF IT WERE MINE — BUT IT BELONGS TO MY CLIENT ANYWAY

HALLO? WHY, COUNT ALBORINI! WE'VE ONLY JUST LEFT YOU — DID I FORGET MY HAT?

1717

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

I REGRET TROUBLING YOU, MR. AQUINO, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING I FEEL WE MUST DISCUSS WITHOUT DELAY

THE RED GRYPHON?..

COUNT ALBORINI PHONES...

...BUT WE'VE ALREADY TALKED ABOUT THAT

SOMETHING ELSE — CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL TITLE TO THE ISLAND

I FEAR THAT THE SALE TO YOUR CLIENT MAY NOT BE VALID

THAT WOULD BE VERY DISCONCERTING — I'LL BE WITH YOU IN TEN MINUTES

1718

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MAX, YOU'RE NOT GOING OUT AGAIN AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

I'M NOT RUFFLING MY FINERY IN THE MOTOR-BOAT

I'M SORRY, BUT ALBORINI FANCIES HE CAN GET THE SALE OF THE ISLAND REVOKED — AND I'VE GOT TO KNOW JUST WHAT KIND OF TRICK HE'S GOING TO TRY

WHERE ARE MY SLACKS?

WELL... AT LEAST IT'S A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME, BEING STOOD UP

MY SWEET, MAKE SOME COFFEE AND WAIT UP FOR ME — I'LL BE BACK IN AN HOUR

1719

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AN HOUR AFTER MAX HAS LEFT, THE PHONE RINGS
YES?
COUNT ALBORINI SPEAKING... I AM SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, MISS BLAISE...
...WHEN I RANG EARLIER, MR. AQUINO PROMISED TO CALL ROUND AND SEE ME AT ONCE — BUT I AM STILL WAITING
I DON'T UNDERSTAND — HE LEFT IMMEDIATELY, AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN WITH YOU FIFTY MINUTES AGO
THAT IS RATHER STRANGE — LET US HOPE HE HAS NOT MET WITH AN ACCIDENT ON THE WAY!
1720
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN A NARROW CANAL, ON THE ROUTE BETWEEN MODESTY'S FLAT AND THE PALAZZO ALBORINI
HOLD IT! I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING OVER BY THE STEPS...
A MOTOR-BOAT CAPSIZED! HOW COULD THAT HAPPEN IN CANAL WATERS? IS THIS YOUR FRIEND'S BOAT, SIGNORINA?
YES
OH, MY GOD...
TAKE ME TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WILL YOU
1720A
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MORNING... AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN VENICE
WE HAVE DRAGGED THE AREA WHERE YOU DISCOVERED MR. AQUINO'S CAPSIZED BOAT, MISS BLAISE... AND WE FOUND THE BODY OF A MAN RECENTLY DROWNED
THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO FACE THE ORDEAL OF IDENTIFYING THE BODY — WE CAN FIND A FRIEND TO DO IT
THANK YOU... BUT I'LL DO IT MYSELF
YES... THAT'S MAX... MAX AQUINO
THANK YOU, SIGNORINA
1721
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
PLEASE ACCEPT MY SYMPATHY AT THIS TRAGIC ACCIDENT, SIGNORINA
THANK YOU
Sleep well, Max...
MODESTY PUTS THROUGH A CALL TO WILLIE GARVIN, AT THE TREADMILL, IN ENGLAND
PRINCESS! NICE TO GET A CALL FROM YOU — 'OW'S EVERYTHING?
NOT VERY GOOD, WILLIE... MAX IS DEAD... SOMEBODY ARRANGED AN ACCIDENT FOR HIM
ARRANGED? GOD, I'M SORRY, PRINCESS — I'LL BE ON THE NEXT PLANE OUT
THANKS, WILLIE LOVE ... BUT LISTEN, I WANT YOU TO BRING SOME SPECIAL GEAR
1722

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY GOES TO THE PALAZZO

I REGRET COUNT ALBORINI IS IN PADUA ON BUSINESS TODAY, MISS BLAISE — WILL YOU LEAVE A MESSAGE?

NO, I'LL CALL AGAIN... THERE ARE ONE OR TWO THINGS I WANT TO ASK HIM

MAY I RETURN THIS HANDKERCHIEF WHICH WAS FOUND IN THE GARDENS? IT HAS YOUR INITIALS

YES, IT'S MINE — I MUST HAVE LOST IT AT THE BALL LAST NIGHT

BUT I DIDN'T — THIS IS THE ONE I GAVE FRANCESCA — SHE'S BEEN HERE WITH ANGELO — THAT'S HOW ALBORINI KNOWS ABOUT THE RED GRYPHON!

1723

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

AT THE CONVENT OF SANTA MARIA...

ANGELO AND FRANCESCA? OHHH, YES, SIGNORINA... WE HAVE TRIED TO TAKE THOSE TWO LITTLE ONES INTO OUR CARE, BUT THEY ALWAYS RUN AWAY

DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND THEM, REVEREND MOTHER?

THEY LIVE IN PART OF AN OLD WAREHOUSE WHICH IS NO LONGER USED — I CAN DIRECT YOU THERE

IF YOU CAN PERSUADE THEM TO LET US SEND THEM TO OUR CHILDREN'S HOMES, IT WILL BE A GREAT BLESSING

THEY DON'T WANT TO BE SEPARATED — BUT I'LL DO WHAT I CAN

1724

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

A CRUMBLING WAREHOUSE, ABANDONED, SINKING SLOWLY INTO THE SEA

ANGELO? FRANCESCA?

SIGNORINA! HELP!

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US —!

GET THE WOMAN!

UHH...

1725

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

AS THE MAN RUNS FORWARD, MODESTY RIPS OPEN THE VELCRO FASTENER DOWN THE SIDE OF HER SKIRT WITH A SINGLE MOVEMENT...

...CASTS THE SKIRT LIKE A NET AS SHE KICKS OFF HER SHOES...

LOOK OUT!

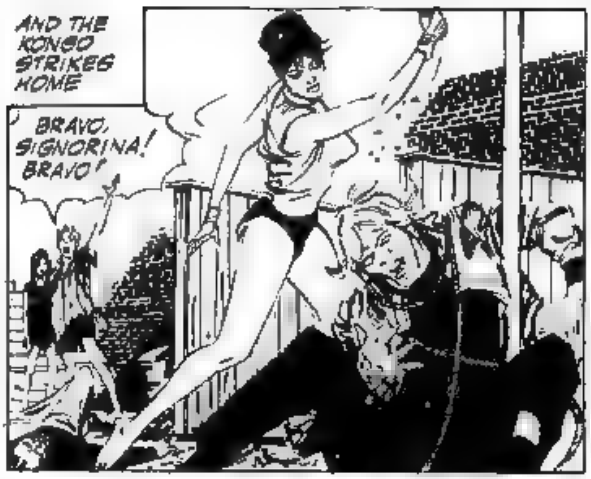
...AND SWINGS UNDER THE HANDRAIL

1726

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE MAN GOES DOWN AS IF POLE-AXED UNDER MODESTY'S ATTACK... AND ANGELO SEIZES HIS CHANCE
AHH!
RUN ANGELO!
THE SLIM, NEEDLE-POINTED BLADE OF A STILETTO GLEAMS SUDDENLY IN THE GLOOM OF THE WAREHOUSE
1727
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
STILETTO... USELESS FOR THROWING...
... BUT HE KNOWS HOW TO USE IT
ANGELO! I TOLD YOU TO RUN!
I CANNOT LEAVE FRANCESCA SIGNORINA!
1728
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE SIGNORINA KICKED ONE MAN IN THE HEAD — BUT THE OTHER HAS A KNIFE!
ANGELO... WHAT IS HAPPENING?
MODESTY KEEPS A STANCHION BETWEEN HER AND THE STILETTO-MAN
CAN'T RUSH ME... HE'LL HAVE TO MOVE IN SLOWLY AND DRIVE ME BACK
NOW..!
729
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY SWINGS THE THICK ROPE WITH THE RUSTED PULLEY ON THE END AND LETS IT SLIP THROUGH HER HAND TO MAKE A WIDE ARC
LIKE A BOLAS THE WEIGHTED ROPE COILS ROUND, AND MODESTY JERKS BACK HARD
UHH!
1790

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL



BRAVISSIMO! I HAVE NEVER SEEN A GIRL DO ANYTHING AS CLEVER AS THAT!
YOU CAN SKIP THE APPLAUSE — I WANT SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED, QUICKLY!
1731

MODESTY BLAISE

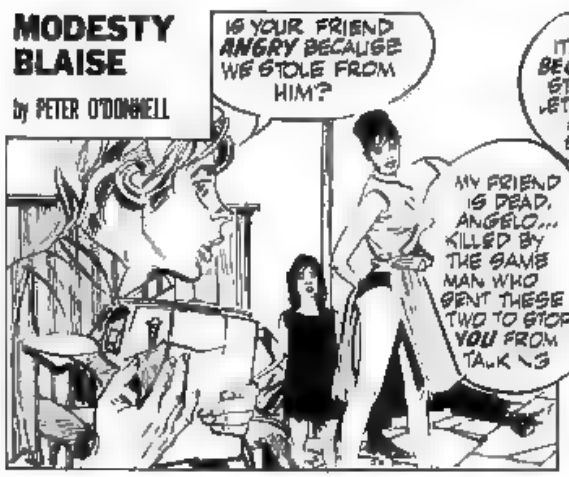
by PETER O'DONNELL

HIS NAME ALBORINI WAS IN THE LETTER— WE THOUGHT HE MIGHT GIVE US MONEY FOR IT
YOU FOUND AN OLD LETTER IN THE CASE YOU STOLE FROM MY FRIEND— WHY DID YOU TAKE IT TO THE COUNT?

SOMETHING ABOUT GOLD AND JEWELS PUT UNDER A STATUE A LONG TIME AGO— HERE'S YOUR SKIRT, SIGNORINA
THE RED GRYPHON... SO THAT WAS THE SURPRISE MAX WAS GOING TO SHOW ME...
1732

MODESTY BLAISE

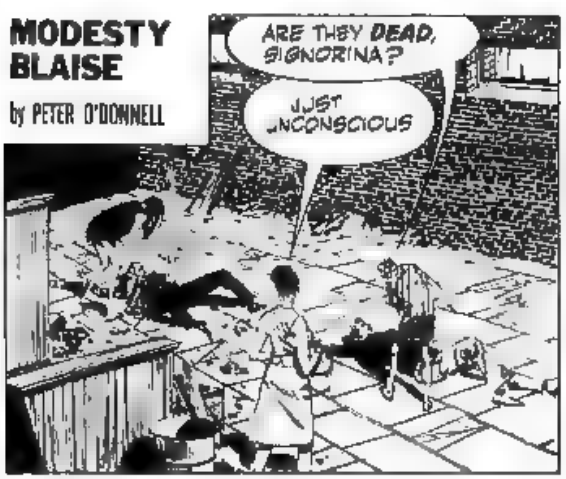
by PETER O'DONNELL


IS YOUR FRIEND ANGRY BECAUSE WE STOLE FROM HIM?
MY FRIEND IS DEAD, ANGELO... KILLED BY THE SAME MAN WHO SENT THESE TWO TO STOP YOU FROM TALKING

OHH.... WAS IT... WAS IT BECAUSE WE STOLE THE LETTER THAT THEY KILLED HIM SIGNORINA?
MY GOD... IT WAS... AND BECAUSE THEY SOLD IT TO ALBORINI ... FOR A FEW SHILLINGS

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL



MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

AT THE CONVENT...

I'VE FROM GED YOU WON'T SEND THEM TO SEPARATE HOUSES FOR AT LEAST A WEEK REVEREND MOTHER

A HAPPY THOUGHT SIGNORINA — IT WILL GIVE THEM TIME TO GROW USED TO THE IDEA

I'LL COME BACK IN LESS THAN A WEEK — DON'T RUN AWAY DON'T EVEN GO OUTSIDE — THERE ARE MEN WHO WANT TO KILL YOU

O.K. TO CAN I BE ALONE SIGNORINA

I DON'T KNOW SHE'S VERY CLEVER — FOR A GIRL, I MEAN

THANK YOU ANGELO BUT I WON'T BE ALONE I HAVE A CLEVER BOY COMING TO HELP

155

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

ALBORNI WILL SOON HAVE SOME OF HIS MUSCLE LOOKING FOR ME

I'LL HAVE TO MOVE OUT OF THE FLAT — LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR WILLIE AT THE AIRPORT TO LET HIM KNOW... AND IT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE TAKING A LOOK AROUND TONIGHT

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE HERE BY THE SOUND OF IT — SOMEONE'S CLIMBING ROUND AT THE FRONT

156

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY LOOKS DOWN FROM A BALCONY GLASSES UP THE LONG COURT OF THE PALAZZO

SO ALBORNI'S PUT A TEAM TO SEEK THE RED GRYPHON "OH SU" — HE'S NOT WASTING ANY TIME

A MARCH A BARGE WITH A DERRICK AND A DOZEN MEN

WONDER IF HE'S HERE IN PERSON...? BETTER GO DOWN AND TAKE A LOOK

157

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

THE STATUE ITSELF IS NOT IMPORTANT — THE WHOLE TERRAZZO BASE MUST BE REMOVED, AND WITH CARE!

IT'S BOLTED IN THE GROUND SIGNORE... TO CUT IT FREE WITHOUT DRILLS IS A BIG TASK

DRILLS MIGHT BE HEARD ON THE MAINLAND

YOU HAVE A DOZEN MEN AND ALL NIGHT — GET ON WITH IT!

THESE ARE JUST HIRED WORKMEN... HAVE TO STOP THEM WITHOUT PLAYING JOE BOUSH

158

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

A barrowload of sledge-hammers and long cold-chisels is wheeled from the barge

First we must cut recesses for the lifting

Then when the bage is secured to chains from the derrick—

Something has caught fire up there I think

Fire?

On the roof of the palazzo...

That ought to worry our friend a little...

1739

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Get that fire out! Every man of you — HURRY!

Matteo! What is wrong?

A fire on the roof! Only small but if it spreads we shall have police boats coming from the mainland

MOVE you snails!

1740

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Matteo and the workmen climb to deal with the fire

Alborini's not here ... a pity

It's a good night for an accident — like Max had

Two minutes later on the barge

Only one man aboard — and he's the other half of the pair who tried to write off Angelo and Francesca

Modesty strikes a carefully judged blow with the kongo

Just a tap... don't want him out for too long

1741

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

On the roof of the palazzo... the fire is easily put out

It was only some old newspapers, Signore

Ye-e-es... but how did it catch fire?

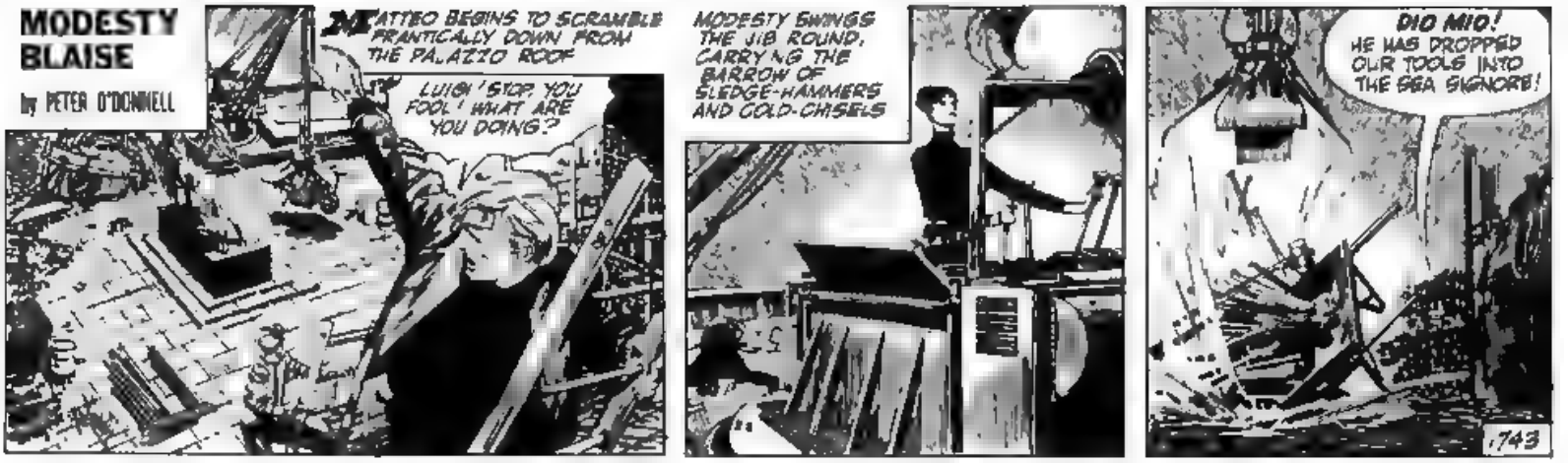
That is very strange Signore... your friend is picking up our barrow of tools with the derrick

What?

1742

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


MATTEO BEGINS TO SCRAMBLE FRANTICALLY DOWN FROM THE PALAZZO ROOF
LUIGI! STOP YOU FOOL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MODESTY SWINGS THE JIB ROUND, CARRYING THE BARROW OF SLEDGE-HAMMERS AND COLD-CHISELS
DIO MIO! HE HAS DROPPED OUR TOOLS INTO THE SEA SIGNORE!
1743

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

LUIGI COMES ROUND... TO FIND HIMSELF SLUMPED OVER THE CONTROLS OF THE DERRICK
WHAT...?
LUNATIC! THE COUNT WILL GO MAD WHEN HE HEARS OF THIS!
EH...? MY-MY HEAD HURTS! WHAT HAPPENED?
HAPPENED? YOU SHOULD KNOW! THE SLEDGE-HAMMERS! THE COLD-CHISELS! ALL THE TOOLS! YOU PICKED THEM UP WITH THE DERRICK AND DROPPED THEM IN THE SEA, IMBECILE!
1744

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WE SAW YOU! WHO ELSE WAS HERE TO OPERATE THE DERRICK?
BUT-BUT I DID NOT DROP THE TOOLS INTO THE SEA, MATTEO!
NOBODY... I MEAN, SOMEBODY MUST HAVE— DEAR GOD, MY HEAD!
YOU'D HAVE REALLY ENJOYED THIS BIT, MAX...
ONE THING IS CERTAIN, SIGNORE ... OUR TOOLS ARE ON THE SEA-BED, AND WE ARE NOT DIVERS — IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE THE RED GRYPHON TONIGHT!
1745

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

IN THE EARLY HOURS, MATTEO AND LUIGI REPORT TO THEIR MASTER, COUNT ALBORIN!
SO YOU FAILED AGAIN...!
IT WAS NOT OUR FAULT EXCELLENCY — PERHAPS THE ISLAND IS HAUNTED!
CAN A GHOST OPERATE A DERRICK, FOOL? NO... IT WAS THE SAME WOMAN WHO THRASHED YOU BOTH YESTERDAY! MODESTY BLAISE...
FIND HER AND BRING HER TO ME!
IN A SMALL HOTEL, MODESTY SLEEPS AFTER HER NIGHT'S WORK
1746

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Soon after dawn, a faint sound wakes Modesty

ONLY ME, PRINCESS

I PICKED UP YOUR MESSAGE AT THE AIRPORT AND CAME STRAIGHT 'ERE — GOT A ROOM JUST ALONG THE CORRIDOR

WILLIE LOVE ... OH, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU

1747

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Modesty tells Willie how Max Aquino learned of the treasure hidden in the base of *THE RED GRYPHON*... and how he was killed

I'M... YOU KNOW ... SORRY ABOUT MAX

YES...

... IT WASN'T THE GREATEST ROMANCE EVER, BUT MAX MEANT A LOT TO ME... HE WORKED HARD, PLAYED HARD, HURT NOBODY... HE CLOWNED A LITTLE, LAUGHED EASILY, AND REALLY ENJOYED BEING ALIVE

I'M NOT GOING TO LET ALBORINI PUT HIM DOWN LIKE A DOG AND GET AWAY WITH IT

SURE

1748

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WHAT D'YOU WANT TO DO PRINCESS?

STOP ALBORINI GETTING THE LOOT — AND SIGN HIM OFF

OKAY... NOW LOOK, YOU'RE FEELING A BIT PEAKY OVER MAX BEING MURDERED SO YOU GO 'OME AND LEAVE IT TO ME — I'LL GIVE ALBORINI THE CHOP, THEN PICK UP THE LOOT

THANKS, WILLIE LOVE, BUT I HAVE IT ALL PLANNED — AND I'M NOT GOING TO SIT THIS ONE OUT

1749

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

At noon, Willie Garvin calls at Count Alborini's palazzo

AN ENGLISHMAN? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE HIM, EXCELLENCY — HE IS A *SPECIALIST*, AND IT WAS MAX AQUINO WHO SENT FOR HIM!

A SPECIALIST IN *WHAT?*

DEMOLITION! HE OPERATES A *THERMIC LANCE* — AN INSTRUMENT THAT WILL SLICE THROUGH *REINFORCED CONCRETE!*

THIS IS THE ANSWER! BUT WAIT — HE MUST HAVE BEEN TO AQUINO'S FLAT — WAS HE SPOKEN WITH MODESTY BLAISE?

IMPOSSIBLE, EXCELLENCY — SHE HAS MOVED OUT! LUIGI AND MATTEO ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR HER

1750

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

TO SEE IF THE JOB'S STILL ON
GOOD MORNING, MR SHAW— WHAT MADE YOU COME TO ME WHEN YOU DISCOVERED THAT POOR MR AQUINO HAD DIED IN AN ACCIDENT?
WHEN HE RANG ME IN ENGLAND HE MENTIONED YOUR NAME, SO I THOUGHT I WAS YOU HE WAS ACTING FOR — MAYBE I GOT IT WRONG
NO, NO — THAT IS QUITE CORRECT
AND THE JOB IS STILL ON
I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE BROUGHT YOUR EQUIPMENT WITH YOU? AN IMMENSELY POWERFUL CUTTING TOOL...
THERMIC LANCE — SURE, IT'S AT THE AIRPORT
1751

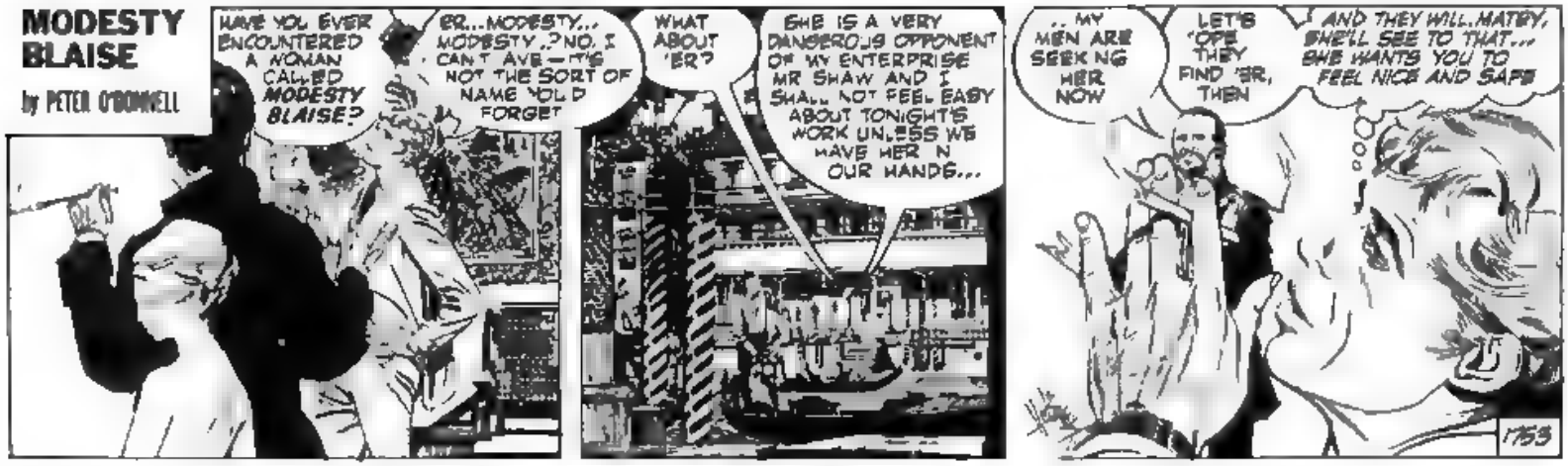
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WELL, MR SHAW I AM HAPPY TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR JOURNEY HAS NOT BEEN WASTED IN SPITE OF MR. AQUINO'S UNFORTUNATE DEATH...
...I KNOW WHY HE SENT FOR YOU AND YOUR THERMIC LANCE, AND I INTEND TO SUPERVISE THE WORK PERSONALLY
GOOD— I'VE PAID ALL ME OWN EXPENSES SO FAR
I WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL THAT AND OF YOUR FEE... NOW ARE YOU A DISCREET MAN MR SHAW? AND CAN YOU WORK AT NIGHT?
BOTH— IF THE MONEY'S RIGHT
1752

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


HAVE YOU EVER ENCOUNTERED A WOMAN CALLED MODESTY BLAISE?
ER...MODESTY... MODESTY...? NO, I CAN'T AVE — IT'S NOT THE SORT OF NAME YOU'D FORGET
WHAT ABOUT 'ER?
SHE IS A VERY DANGEROUS OPPONENT OF MY ENTERPRISE MR SHAW AND I SHALL NOT FEEL EASY ABOUT TONIGHT'S WORK UNLESS WE HAVE HER IN OUR HANDS...
.. MY MEN ARE SEEKING HER NOW
LET'S 'OPE THEY FIND 'ER, THEN
AND THEY WILL, MATEY, SHE'LL SEE TO THAT... SHE WANTS YOU TO FEEL NICE AND SAFE
1753

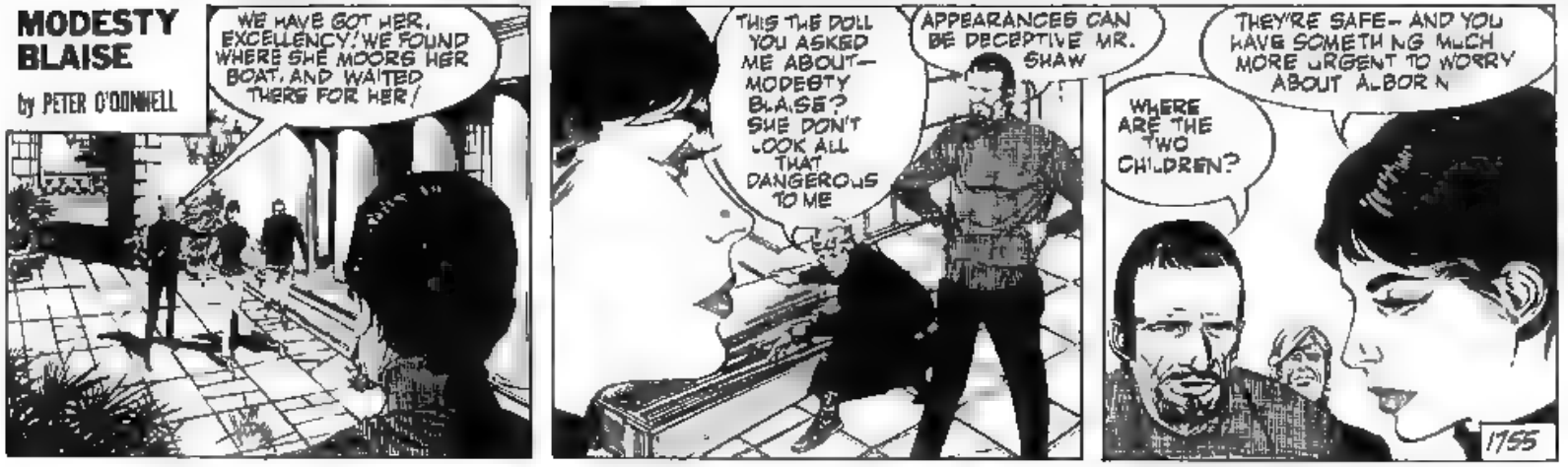
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

CAN YOU DO IT MR SHAW?
IT'LL BURN UP A LOT OF LANCE... BUT I'VE GOT 250 FEET WITH ME... THE OXYGEN'S YOUR JOB, I'LL NEED FIFTEEN CYLINDERS OF 300 CUBIC FEET
AN HOUR BEFORE SUNSET...
SIGNORINA... LOOK BEHIND YOU
THE GUN IS SILENCED— HE WILL SHOOT TO KILL IF YOU DO NOT GO QUIETLY WITH US
1754

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


WE HAVE GOT HER, EXCELLENCY! WE FOUND WHERE SHE MOORS HER BOAT, AND WAITED THERE FOR HER!
THIS THE DOLL YOU ASKED ME ABOUT— MODESTY BLAISE? SHE DON'T LOOK ALL THAT DANGEROUS TO ME
APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE MR. SHAW
WHERE ARE THE TWO CHILDREN?
THEY'RE SAFE— AND YOU HAVE SOMETHING MUCH MORE URGENT TO WORRY ABOUT ALBORIN
1755

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY IS A PRISONER— BY HER OWN DESIGN

... NOW SHE'S GOT TO PUT A STOPPER ON THEM KNOCKING 'ER OFF RIGHT AWAY...
I THINK YOU HAVE MORE TO WORRY ABOUT THAN I MISS BLAISE
PERHAPS... BUT THERE'S A FULL STATEMENT IN A STRONGBOX AT MY BANK HERE. TO BE OPENED IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME
THEN YOU MUST LIVE UNTIL WE HAVE PERSUADED YOU TO WRITE AN AUTHORISATION FOR ME TO WITHDRAW THE DOCUMENT— A TASK WE SHALL CONCENTRATE ON TOMORROW AT LEISURE
RELAX, WILLIE BOY...
1756

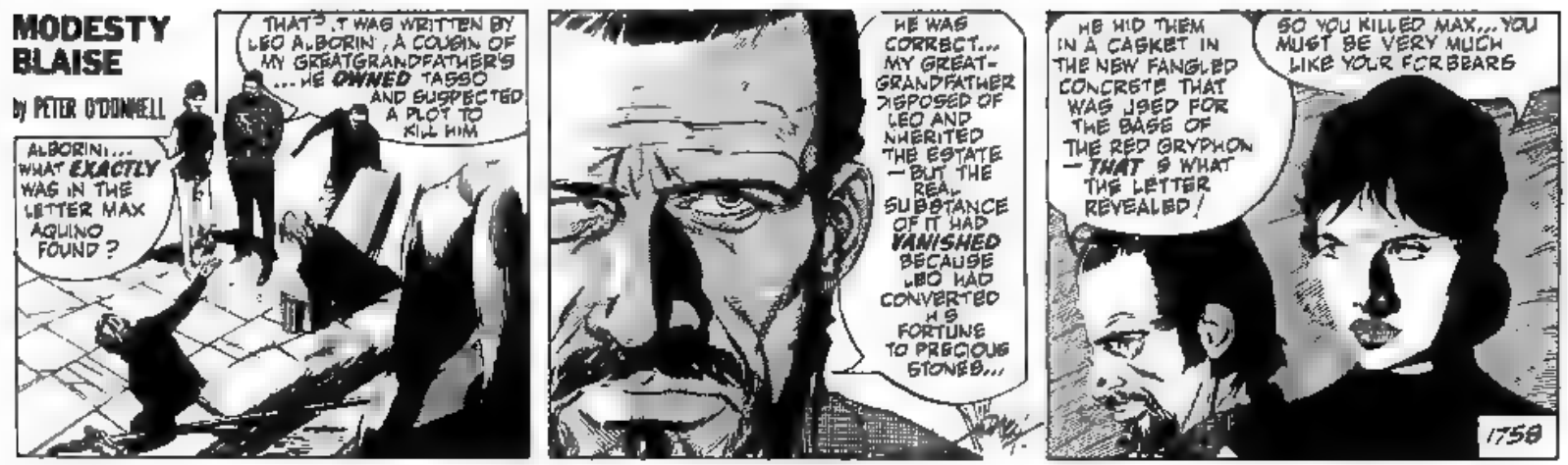
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

TOWARDS MIDNIGHT ON THE ISLAND OF TASSO WATER IS PUMPED INTO A RING OF SANDBAGS ROUND THE BASE OF THE RED GRYPHON
AND WILLIE GARVIN PREPARES TO USE A THERMIC LANCE— A STEEL TUBE PACKED WITH MILD STEEL RODS THROUGH WHICH OXYGEN IS PASSED IGNITED BY PRE-HEATING WITH A BLOWPIPE AND CAPABLE OF MELTING CONCRETE TO SILICA SLAG
DO NOT HOPE FOR RESCUE, MISS BLAISE— HE WILL WORK UNDER WATER SO NO LIGHT WILL BE SEEN FROM THE MAIN, AND
1757

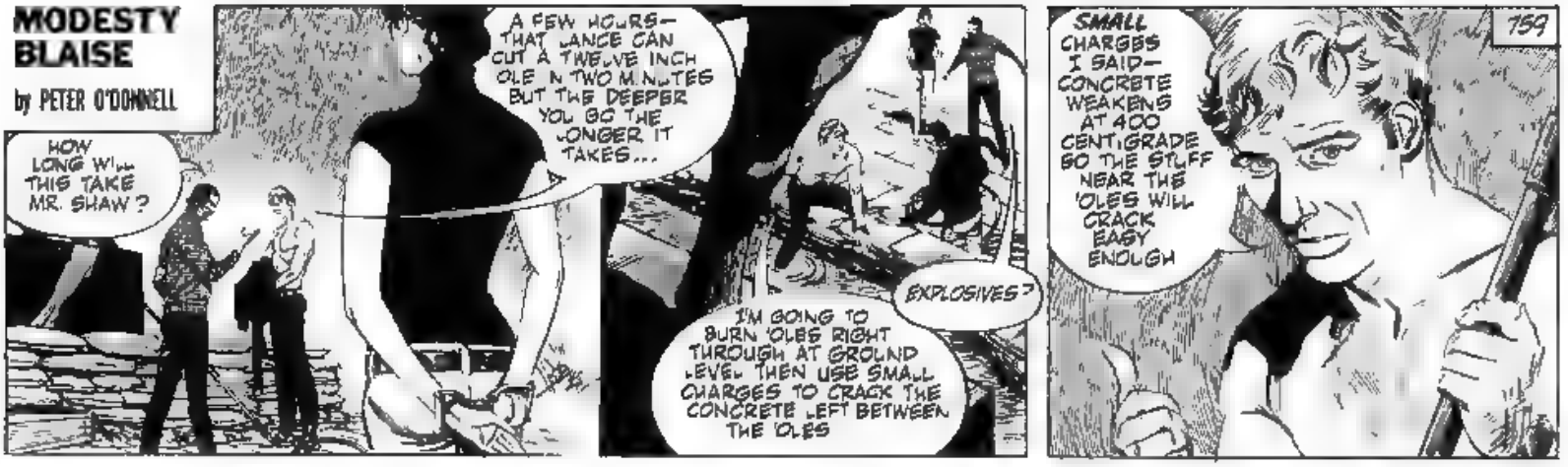
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


THAT'S IT. IT WAS WRITTEN BY LEO ALBORIN, A COUSIN OF MY GREATGRANDFATHER'S ... HE OWNED TASSO AND SUSPECTED A PLOT TO KILL HIM
ALBORIN!... WHAT EXACTLY WAS IN THE LETTER MAX AQUINO FOUND?
HE WAS CORRECT... MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER DISPOSED OF LEO AND INHERITED THE ESTATE — BUT THE REAL SUBSTANCE OF IT HAD VANISHED BECAUSE LEO HAD CONVERTED HIS FORTUNE TO PRECIOUS STONES...
HE HID THEM IN A CASKET IN THE NEW FANGLED CONCRETE THAT WAS USED FOR THE BASE OF THE RED GRYPHON — THAT'S WHAT THE LETTER REVEALED!
SO YOU KILLED MAX... YOU MUST BE VERY MUCH LIKE YOUR FORBEARS
1758

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE MR. SHAW?
A FEW HOURS— THAT LANCE CAN CUT A TWELVE INCH OLE IN TWO MINUTES BUT THE DEEPER YOU GO THE LONGER IT TAKES...
EXPLOSIVES?
I'M GOING TO BURN 'OLES RIGHT THROUGH AT GROUND LEVEL THEN USE SMALL CHARGES TO CRACK THE CONCRETE LEFT BETWEEN THE 'OLES
SMALL CHARGES I SAID— CONCRETE WEAKENS AT 400 CENTIGRADE SO THE STUFF NEAR THE 'OLES WILL CRACK EASY ENOUGH
759

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WILLIE GARVIN IGNITES THE TIP OF THE THERMIC LANCE...
...THEN CLIPS ON A SNORKEL AND KNEELS DOWN IN THE LITTLE POOL
WAIT TILL WILLIE'S FINISHED THE JOB BEFORE WE MAKE OUR MOVE...
IT'S EARLY CONCRETE, MORE THAN A CENTURY OLD— NOT SO TOUGH AS MODERN STUFF
UNDER THE CONCENTRATED HEAT OF OVER 2500 DEGREES CENTIGRADE, THE CONCRETE TURNS TO FLUID SLAG
1760

MODEST BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

I PAUSE TO FIT A NEW LENGTH OF LANCE — FOR THE THIRD TIME
MR SHAW, WILL THE HEAT AFFECT ANYTHING HIDDEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CONCRETE?
NO— THERE'S 'ARDLY ANY HEAT TRANSFERENCE THROUGH THE CONCRETE, AND THE BLOCK'S WATER-COOLED ANYWAY
IS PROGRESS GOOD?
ABOUT TWICE AS GOOD AS I 'OPED FOR— IT'S PRETTY OLD CONCRETE — I RECKON I CAN UNDERCUT THE WHOLE BLOCK WITHOUT USING ANY CHARGES
1761

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WILLIE GARVIN FIXES CHAINS FROM THE DERRICK ROUND THE GREAT BASE ON WHICH THE RED GRYPHON STANDS
BLIMEY YOU COULD COOK A LOBSTER IN THIS POOL...
HOW MUCH LONGER MR SHAW?
NEARLY DONE— I LEFT A BIT OF SUPPORT AT EACH CORNER NOW I'VE JUST GOT TO CUT 'EM AWAY
MODESTY DRAWS OUT A LOCK-PICK FROM ITS HIDING PLACE IN HER WAISTBAND
WILLIE SUBMERGES FOR THE LAST TIME
IT'S AT THIS POINT, I SUPPOSE THAT YOU INTEND TO FREE YOURSELF FROM THOSE HANDCUFFS SO THAT YOU AND YOUR PARTNER CAN TAKE OVER MISS BLAISE?
HE KNOWS!
1762

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

COUNT ALBORINI TAKES THE LOCK-PICK FROM MODESTY'S FINGERS

AH YES... AS I THOUGHT! I FEAR YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE NOTORIETY OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIEND MR SHAW— OR SHOULD I SAY GARVIN?

THIS EVENING I PHONED A JOURNALIST I KNOW IN ROME... HE KNEW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT MODESTY BLAISE, AND HIS DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COLLEAGUE GARVIN FITTED "MR SHAW" EXACTLY!

1763

SO I HAVE KNOWN FOR SOME HOURS THAT THE TWO OF YOU WERE PLOTTING AGAINST ME!

WILLIE GARVIN, WORKING SUBMERGED WITH THE THERMIC-LANCE, IS UNAWARE OF THE SUDDEN DANGER

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

SHE'S CLEAR! LIFT AWAY!

NOW'S THE TIME FOR THE PRINCESS TO CLOBBER ALBORIN AND HIS MATE...

KILL HIM NOW MATTEO

HANDCUFFED AS SHE IS, MODESTY BRINGS OFF A CROSS-BUTTOCK TO FREE HER MOUTH—

DIVE WILLIE! WE'RE BLOWN!

1764

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

ONE SHOT IS FIRED FROM THE SILENCED GUN

THE SEA, WILLIE! DIVE, DAMN YOU!

A FLYING HEAD-BUTT SENDS THE SECOND SHOT WIDE

1765

AND WILLIE GARVIN HITS THE WATER, DIVING DEEP. A FLESH WOUND BURNING HIS SHOULDER... DESPERATELY AFRAID FOR MODESTY, BUT OBEYING FROM LONG INGRAINED FAITH IN HER JUDGMENT

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

STILL HANDCUFFED, MODESTY DRIVES A KNEE INTO MATTEO'S STOMACH— AND A QUICK KICK SENDS THE GUN SLIDING INTO THE SEA . . .

UHH!

I'LL GET HER, EXCELLENCY!

AS MODESTY RUNS, HEADING FOR THE PALAZZO...

DON'T SHOOT! THAT GUN IS NOT SILENCED DO YOU WANT TO BRING THE POLICE FROM THE MAINLAND, FOOL?

1766

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SHE... GOT AWAY EXCELLENCY
AND THE ONLY SILENCED GUN IS IN THE SEA! BUT SHE'S STILL HANDCUFFED, WE WON'T NEED A GUN TO K... HER— GIVE ME YOUR DAGGER MATTEO
THERE IS GARVIN TOO...
WITH A BU...ET THROUGH H S SHOULDER HE MAY HAVE DROWNED ALREADY... STAY HERE AND WATCH FOR H M, LUIG
IF YOU SEE H M, BEAT HIS HEAD IN! MATTEO AND I WILL GO AND HUNT DOWN THE BLAISE WOMAN IN THE PALAZZO
AHH... SHE GOT CLEAR..
1767

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN THE HALF RESTORED PALAZZO...
CAN'T GET THE CUFFS OFF NOW BUT AT LEAST I CAN GET MY HANDS IN FRONT...
TWO OF THEM COMING AFTER ME... HOPE TO GOD WILLIE LIES LOW WITH THAT BULLET IN H.M
GOT TO FINISH THIS FAST AND GET BACK TO HIM— NO USE PLAYING H DE-AND-SEEK HERE ALL N GHT
1768

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MODESTY MOVES THROUGH THE PALAZZO KNOWING IT WELL FROM THE MANY DAYS SPENT THERE WITH MAX AQUINO
SIGNORINA... SHOW YOURSELF, AND WE WILL TALK— MAKE A DEAL AS THEY SAY
I'M HERE, ALBORINI... JP HERE
1769

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
EXCELLENCY... IF WE KILL HER, THERE IS THE STATEMENT SHE LEFT IN A STRONGBOX AT THE BANK
NO, MATTEO...
...THAT WAS A ...E TO PREVENT ME KILL NG HER WHEN SHE ALLOWED HERSELF TO BE CAPTURED— HER KIND F GHT THEIR OWN BATTLES, AND THEY TAKE OUT NO INSURANCE AGAINST DEFEAT
HERE, ALBORINI... I'M HERE IF YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT MAKING A DEAL...
1770

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

By the sea wall, Luigi watches for Willie Garvin

No sign... he is surely dead... lost much blood from the bullet wound, and was drowned

Close against the barge, Willie scrapes a handful of tar from a fender, and presses it hard over the wound

It'll stick when it gets a bit warmer...

And in the Palazzo Modesty's voice draws the killers on

Here, Alborin ... in the great bedroom of your ancestors...

1771

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Matteo and Alborini hesitate on the threshold of the great bedroom...

Push the door wide, then wait... she may be trying to take us by surprise —

The attack comes from **behind**...

And Alborini's stiletto is driven deep into Matteo's back

1772

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

His wound staunched with tar, Willie Garvin draws a knife from his boot

Stopped the bleeding... time I made a move

Ah — **there** he is! Now we make sure

The body drifts limply towards the steps

But no shooting... His Excellency wants no noise...

1773

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

Luigi lifts the pick, ready to strike...

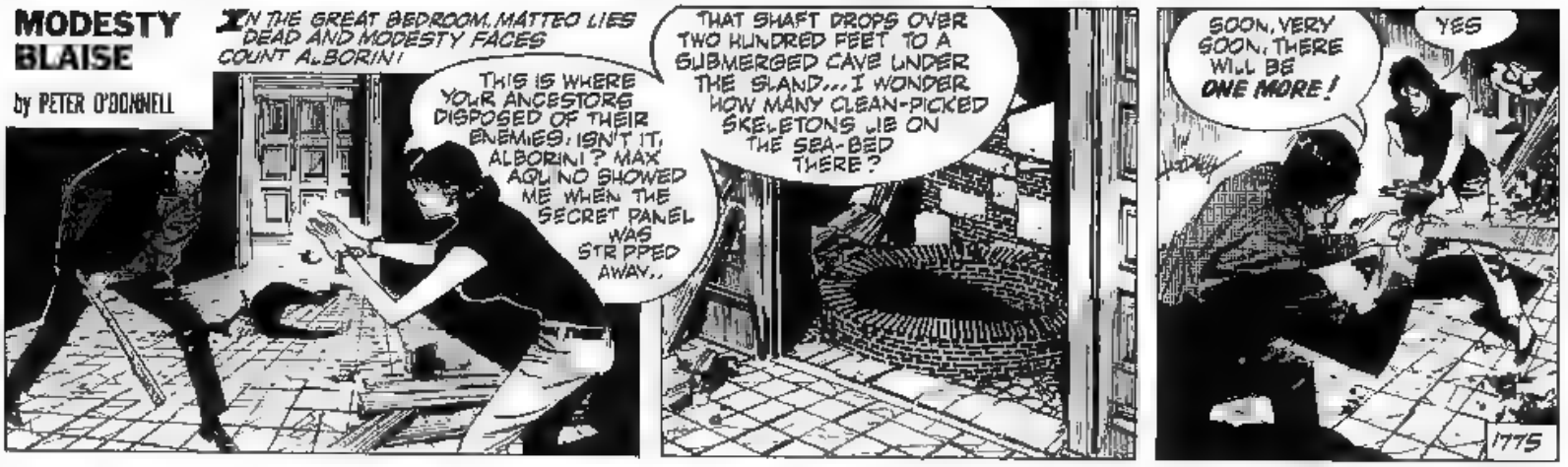
...and the knife takes him in the throat

Got to find the princess — there's two of 'em after 'er and she's still 'andcuffed — where's that gun he dropped? Ah...!

1774

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


IN THE GREAT BEDROOM, MATTEO LIES DEAD AND MODESTY FACES COUNT ALBORINI
THIS IS WHERE YOUR ANCESTORS DISPOSED OF THEIR ENEMIES; ISN'T IT, ALBORINI? MAX AQUINO SHOWED ME WHEN THE SECRET PANEL WAS STRIPPED AWAY..
THAT SHAFT DROPS OVER TWO HUNDRED FEET TO A SUBMERGED CAVE UNDER THE ISLAND... I WONDER HOW MANY CLEAN-PICKED SKELETONS LIE ON THE SEA-BED THERE?
SOON, VERY SOON, THERE WILL BE ONE MORE!
YES
1775

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

ALBORINI SLASHES WITH THE PICK HANDLE, AND MODESTY JUMPS BACK
PRINCESS!
WILLIE GARVIN... THAT MEANS LUIGI IS DEAD, TOO— THERE'S ONLY YOU LEFT, ALBORINI
1776

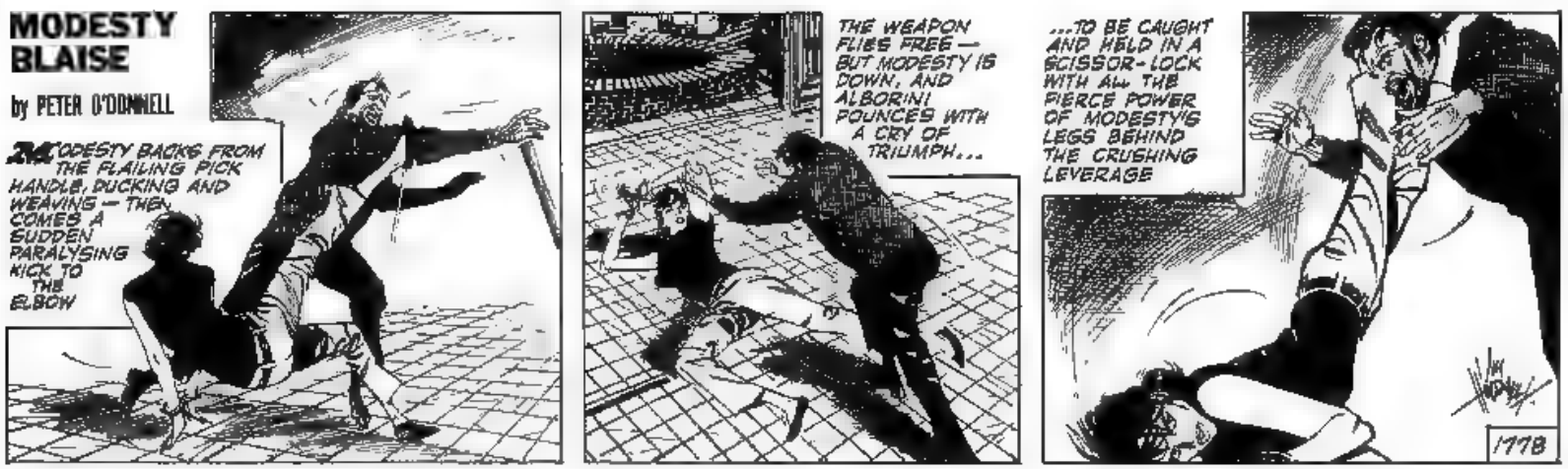
MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MAX AQUINO WAS A DECENT HONEST HUMAN BEING, AND YOU KILLED HIM FOR A FEW PEBBLES—
HE DESERVED TO DIE! THE TREASURE WAS HIDDEN BY MY ANCESTOR! IT IS MINE!
YOU'RE A LITTLE MAD, ALBORINI— BUT THAT DOESN'T COUNT AS AN EXCUSE IN MY BOOK... I'M GOING TO PUT YOU DOWN
YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO MAKE THREATS, WOMAN!
1777

MODESTY BLAISE

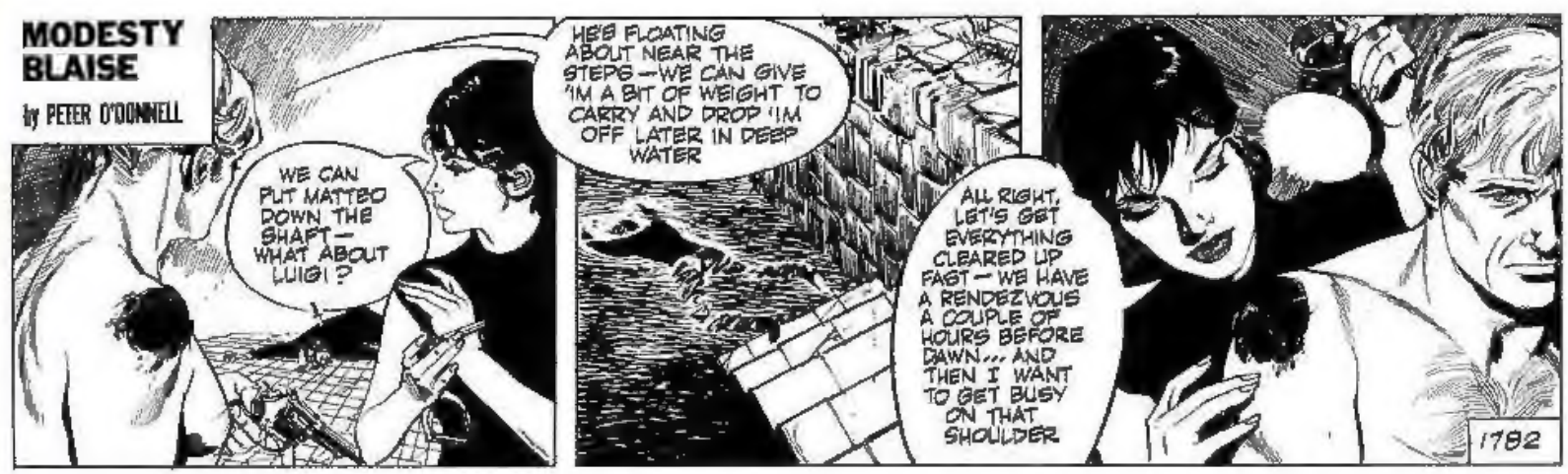
by PETER O'DONNELL


MODESTY BACKS FROM THE FLAILING PICK HANDLE, DUCKING AND WEAVING — THEN COMES A SUDDEN PARALYSING KICK TO THE ELBOW
THE WEAPON FLIES FREE — BUT MODESTY IS DOWN, AND ALBORINI POUNCES WITH A CRY OF TRIUMPH...
...TO BE CAUGHT AND HELD IN A SCISSOR-LOCK WITH ALL THE FIERCE POWER OF MODESTY'S LEGS BEHIND THE CRUSHING LEVERAGE
1778

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HER FEET LOCKED ABOUT ALBORINI'S NECK, MODESTY PUTS ALL HER STRENGTH INTO A SWIFT FORWARD ROLL
ALBORINI SLAMS AGAINST THE WALL ABOVE THE TWO HUNDRED FOOT SHAFT...
NO-!
...AND DROPS HEAD FIRST INTO THE BLACKNESS
GOING DOWN...
I ONLY SAW THE LAST BIT, BUT IT LOOKED LIKE A CONJURING TRICK FROM 'ERE
1779

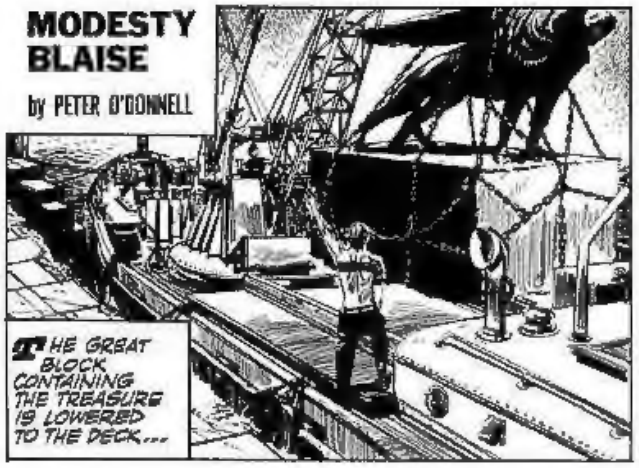
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HALLO WILLIE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
FAIR, THANKS — MUST'VE BEEN A METAL-JACKETED BULLET, WENT THROUGH NICE AN' CLEAN WITHOUT MUSHROOMING
I PLUGGED THE 'OLE WITH TAR, AND IT'LL DO FOR A BIT
WHERE'S ALBORINI GONE?
IT'S AN OLD VENETIAN DISPOSAL-UNIT... FOR DISPOSING OF PEOPLE
STONE SPURS JUTTING OUT TO KILL THEM ON THE WAY DOWN, AND A SUBMERGED SEA-CAVE AT THE BOTTOM... IT SEEMED ABOUT RIGHT FOR ALBORINI
1780

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I GOT A PROBE IN ME BOOT, SO LET'S GET THOSE 'CUFFS OFF... 'OLD THIS A MINUTE, PRINCESS
LUIGI'S GUN...
WILLIE LOVE, YOU COULDN'T HIT VENICE WITH A HANDGUN, EVEN RIGHT-HANDED — WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO DO WITH YOUR LEFT?
WELL... UP TO THIRTY PACES I WAS GOING TO BE DEAD ON TARGET — THROWING IT
MY GOD, I'M GOING TO DINE OUT ON THAT — IN SELECTED COMPANY, OF COURSE
1781


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WE CAN PUT MATTEO DOWN THE SHAFT — WHAT ABOUT LUIGI?
HE'S FLOATING ABOUT NEAR THE STEPS — WE CAN GIVE 'IM A BIT OF WEIGHT TO CARRY AND DROP 'IM OFF LATER IN DEEP WATER
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET EVERYTHING CLEARED UP FAST — WE HAVE A RENDEZVOUS A COUPLE OF HOURS BEFORE DAWN... AND THEN I WANT TO GET BUSY ON THAT SHOULDER
1782

MODESTY BLAISE

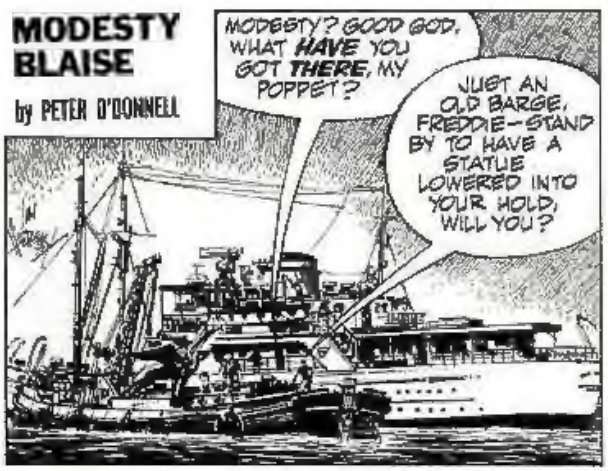
by PETER O'DONNELL



...AND THE BARGE MOVES SLOWLY AWAY
WHAT NEXT, PRINCESS?
I KNEW FREDDIE LAMPSON WAS AT RIMINI WITH HIS YACHT, BETWEEN CRUISES, SO I RANG HIM YESTERDAY...
...HE'LL BE STANDING OFF MALAMOCCO AT 0-THREE-HUNDRED HOURS
1783

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


MODESTY? GOOD GOD, WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE, MY POPPET?
JUST AN OLD BARGE, FREDDIE—STAND BY TO HAVE A STATUE LOWERED INTO YOUR HOLD, WILL YOU?

FIVE MINUTES LATER...
CAN'T SAY I LIKE IT MUCH AS A STATUE, DARLING—AND WHY BRING THE BASE?
SO WE CAN BREAK IT UP VERY GENTLY, FREDDIE

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

HE'D NOT HERE, OLD DEAR—ONLY A SKELETON CREW ABOARD—WE WERE REPAINTING WHEN I GOT YOUR CALL...
WAKE UP YOUR SHIP'S DOCTOR, WILL YOU, FREDDIE?

WELL... I'D BETTER GET SCRUBBED UP AND SEE TO THAT BULLET-HOLE MYSELF, WILLIE
GOOD... I'M MORE USED TO YOU THAN DOCTORS, PRINCESS
1785

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

NO ANAESTHETIC, NOT EVEN A LOCAL, I'M SORRY, POPPET—
I'LL HAVE TO PUT HIM OUT WITH A SLEEPER-HOLD ON THE CAROTID ARTERIES—LONG ENOUGH TO GET THAT TAR OFF AND SCRUB OUT THE BULLET-HOLE

RIGHT... TAKE A LITTLE NAP, WILLIE LOVE
I—I'LL LEAVE YOU TO IT... BULLET-HOLES AND SLEEPER-HOLDS JUST DON'T AGREE WITH ME, SOMEHOW
1786

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FREDDIE LAMPSON RETURNS
ALL THE MUCKY BIT FINISHED? GOOD! I SAY, SHALL I SLEEP HERE IN CASE HE WANTS ANYTHING IN THE NIGHT?
IT'S DAWN, FREDDIE, AND YOU'RE NOT THE NURSING TYPE — I'LL SLEEP HERE MYSELF TODAY
RIGHT-HO, POPPET... I SAY, WHY ARE YOU GOING TO BREAK UP THAT STATUE THING?
BECAUSE THERE'S A FORTUNE BURIED IN THE CONCRETE, FREDDIE
OH, I SEE... YES, OF COURSE... WELL, NIGHT-NIGHT, OLD DEARS — NICE TO HAVE YOU ABOARD
1787
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FOR TWO DAYS THE YACHT CRUISES SOUTH DOWN THE ADRIATIC, THEN TURNS NORTH AGAIN FOR RIMINI
I'M GOING TO USE THOSE SMALL CHARGES I DIDN'T NEED ON TASSO, PRINCESS...
...THEY'LL CRACK IT, AN' WE CAN WORK ON THE CRACKS
AS LONG AS THEY DON'T BLOW A HOLE IN THE SHIP
1788
FEEL FREE, POPPET... THERE'S A LIFEBOAT READY, AND I'M THINKING OF GETTING A NEW YACHT ANYWAY
FREDDIE, YOU'RE MAD, BUT NICE MAD... AND DON'T WORRY, WILLIE KNOWS HIS BANGERS
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AFTER THREE HOURS OF WORK...
SOMETHING HERE, MR. GARVIN!
THAT'S IT...
DIG IT OUT, CHARLIE
JOLLY NICE... WHO DID THEY BELONG TO BEFORE YOU PINCHED THEM, POPPET?
I HAVEN'T PINCHED THEM, FREDDIE... THEY BELONG TO THE MAN MAX AQUINO WAS WORKING FOR
1789
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN ROME, MODESTY CALLS ON THE ITALIAN MILLIONAIRE WHO ENGAGED MAX AQUINO TO BUY THE ISLAND OF TASSO AND RESTORE THE PALAZZO THERE
GOOD AFTERNOON, MISS BLAISE...
... I KNOW YOU BY REPUTATION, I KNOW YOU WERE MAX'S FRIEND, AND I OFFER MY SYMPATHY... I LIKED AND TRUSTED THAT YOUNG MAN... THE ACCIDENT WAS A TRAGEDY
YES... BUT NOT AN ACCIDENT, IT WAS MURDER
MURDER?
1790

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY TELLS A CAREFULLY CENSORED VERSION OF HER STORY

YOU TELL ME MAX LEARNED OF THIS TREASURE, THAT HE REFUSED COUNT ALBORINI'S BRIBE, AND WAS MURDERED— NOW ALBORINI HAS VANISHED, AND **YOU** BRING ME THE TREASURE

A STORY WITH INTRIGUING GAPS, MISS BLAISE — BUT FROM WHAT I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOU I ASSUME ALBORINI WILL NEVER BE SEEN AGAIN

THAT'S QUITE CERTAIN

A GREAT FORTUNE — NOT EASILY SAVED FROM A MAN LIKE ALBORINI... YET YOU HAVE ASKED FOR NOTHING

I'M JUST GOING TO

1791

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

I LEFT A SMALL BOY AND A SMALL GIRL IN THE CARE OF THE NUNS AT THE CONVENT OF SANTA MARIA— BECAUSE THE MEN WHO KILLED MAX WERE AFTER THEM

I'D LIKE... MAX WOULD HAVE LIKED... HALF THE VALUE TO BE GIVEN TO THE CONVENT, ON CONDITION THAT A JOINT HOME IS PROVIDED FOR THE CHILDREN, SO THEY'RE NOT SEPARATED

MISS BLAISE, I AM A RICH MAN, SO LET US GIVE THE **WHOLE** VALUE TO THE CONVENT— ON CONDITION THAT YOU TELL ME THE **WHOLE** STORY! MY CURIOSITY IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!

1792

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

MODESTY RETURNS TO HER HOTEL, AND GOES TO WILLIE'S ROOM

WHAT—? IS THIS THE LATEST DANCE, WILLIE?

JUST DRESSING FOR DINNER... THIS IS THE LATEST WAY OF PUTTING ON A TIE WITH ONE 'AND

YOU WERE QUITE A WHILE— 'OW DID YOU GET ON WITH THE MILLIONAIRE?

FINE! EVERYTHING'S FIXED— I THINK I MADE A BIG HIT WITH HIM, HE KEPT ME TALKING FOR **AGES**

AREN'T YOU GOING TO BE JEALOUS?

PRINCESS... I'LL BE JEALOUS WHEN YOU START PATCHING UP BULLET 'OLES IN 'IM

1793

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

YOU GOING TO SEE THE KIDS IN VENICE AND TELL 'EM?

I HAVE TO— I SAID I'D BE BACK IN A WEEK

I RECKON YOU DON'T FANCY VENICE FOR A BIT, BECAUSE OF MAX... I'LL GO FOR YOU, PRINCESS

NO, I PROMISED — AND SOMEHOW VISITING A CONVENT JUST ISN'T **YOU**, WILLIE LOVE

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT— WHEN I WAS SEVEN I SANG SECOND SOPRANO IN THE ORPHANAGE CHOIR... SOMETIMES I THINK I MISSED ME VOCATION

1794